

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A machine for continuously making pouches from a webbed film material and filling said pouches with a product comprising:

5 a. a support structure on said machine for holding a pair of rolls of said film material;

 b. an apparatus for gripping and unrolling film from each of said rolls such that a pair of continuous sheets of film are brought into close proximity with each other along a path through said machine;

10 c. a plurality of dispensers for inserting product into the pouches as they are being formed;

 d. a first station that reciprocates along the path of said film through said machine, said first station supporting a plurality of pairs of opposing closable heat sealing members for imparting a plurality of longitudinal seals upon said pair
15 of sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without stopping the movement of film through the machine;

 e. a plurality of blades disposed along said path, each such blade being aligned with one of said longitudinal heat sealing members of said first station for separating said sealed film sheets into longitudinal tubular strips;

20 f. a second station that reciprocates along the path of said film through said machine, said second station supporting a pair of opposing closable heat sealing members for imparting transverse seals at spaced intervals upon said

pair of sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without stopping the movement of film through the machine; and

5 g. a third station that reciprocates along the path of said film through said machine, said third station supporting a blade assembly for cutting across the centers of said transverse seals without stopping the movement of film through the machine.

2. (previously amended) The machine of claim 1 wherein the reciprocating movement of each of said first, second and third stations is independent from the
10 reciprocating movement of each of the other of said stations.

3. (original) The machine of claim 1 wherein said gripping apparatus comprises a pair of moveable parallel shafts, each shaft supporting a plurality of rollers at spaced intervals defining a plurality of pairs of opposing rollers positioned in alignment
15 with said longitudinal heat sealing members of said first station.

4. (original) The machine of claim 3 wherein a plurality of dispensing tubes are provided in operative communication with said dispensers, each of said tubes extending between said sheets of film and through the spaced intervals between the
20 plurality of pairs of rollers.

5. (original) The machine of claim 4 wherein a reservoir of product is provided, and said dispensers include a plurality of pumps for removing measured quantities of product from said reservoir and transferring said quantities through said dispensing tubes into said pouches as they are being formed.

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6. (original) The machine of claim 1 wherein said transverse seals are perpendicular to said longitudinal seals.

7. (original) The machine of claim 1 wherein said plurality of blades are provided downstream from said longitudinal heat sealing members.

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8. (original) The machine of claim 1 wherein said film support structure is provided on a side of said machine, and a plurality of guides are provided adjacent to said support structure to align and bring the sheets of film from each roll into close parallel proximity with each other prior to entering the machine.

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9. (currently amended) An apparatus for continuously manufacturing and filling webbed pouches comprising:

- a. a support means for holding a pair of rolls of webbed film material;
- b. a pulling means for gripping and unrolling sheets of webbed film from each of said rolls;

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c. a plurality of dispensing means for inserting product into the pouches as they are being formed;

d. a first sealing means that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for imparting a plurality of longitudinal seals upon said sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without interrupting the flow of film through the apparatus;

e. a plurality of cutting means disposed along said path for separating said sealed film sheets into longitudinal tubular strips;

f. a second sealing means that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for imparting transverse seals at spaced intervals upon said pair of sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without interrupting the flow of film through the apparatus; and

g. a transverse cutting means that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for cutting across the centers of said transverse seals without interrupting the flow of film through the apparatus.

10. (previously amended) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the reciprocating movement of each of said first sealing means, said second sealing means and said transverse cutting means is independent from the reciprocating movement of each of the other of said means.

11. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said pulling means brings a pair of continuous sheets of film from said rolls into close proximity with each other along a path through said apparatus.

5 12. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first sealing means supports a plurality of pairs of opposing closable heat sealing means, and each of said cutting means is aligned with one of said pairs of closable means.

10 13. (original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein said pulling means comprises a pair of moveable parallel shaft means, each shaft supporting a plurality of roller means at spaced intervals defining a plurality of pairs of opposing roller means positioned in alignment with said heat sealing means.

15 14. (original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein a plurality of dispensing tube means are provided in operative communication with said dispensing means, each of said tube means extending between said sheets of film and through the spaced intervals between the plurality of pairs of roller means.

20 15. (original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein a reservoir of product is provided, and said dispensing means include a plurality of pump means for removing measured quantities of product from said reservoir and transferring said quantities through said tube means into said pouches as they are being formed.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said transverse seals are perpendicular to said longitudinal seals.

5 17. (currently amended) A method for continuously forming and filling sealed pouches from webbed film material comprising the steps of:

a. unrolling sheets of said webbed film from a pair of rolls, and guiding said sheets so that they travel in a parallel relationship in close proximity to each other along a path;

10 b. forming at least two continuous longitudinal seals along said film sheets such that said sheets are bonded together at said seals using a first moveable sealing apparatus that reciprocates along the path of said film without interrupting the movement of said film along said path;

15 c. cutting said sealed film sheets into strips along said longitudinal seals;

d. forming cross seals at pre-determined intervals on said film sheets such that said sheets are bonded together at said cross seals using a second moveable cross sealing apparatus that reciprocates along the path of said film without interrupting the movement of said film along said path;

20 e. inserting a measured quantity of product material between the film sheets and between said longitudinal seals following the formation of each cross seal; and

f. cutting said film along each of said cross seals using a second cutting apparatus that reciprocates along the path of said film without interrupting the movement of said film along said path.

5 18. (previously amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the reciprocating movement of each of said first moveable sealing apparatus, said second moveable sealing apparatus and said second cutting apparatus is independent from the reciprocating movement of each of the other of said apparatus.

10 19. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said cross seals are perpendicular to said longitudinal seals.

20. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein said film sheets are cut into strips along said longitudinal seals using a plurality of blades located downstream from
15 said first moveable sealing apparatus.

Full
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^{21.}
~~22.~~ (new) An apparatus for continuously manufacturing, filling and sealing webbed pouches comprising:

- 20 a. a support structure for holding a pair of rolls of webbed film material;
- b. a pulling device for gripping and unrolling sheets of webbed film from each of said rolls;

c. a plurality of dispensers for inserting product into the pouches as they are being formed;

d. a first sealer that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for imparting a plurality of longitudinal seals upon said sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without interrupting the movement of film through the apparatus;

e. a plurality of cutters disposed along said path for separating said sealed film sheets into longitudinal tubular strips;

f. a second sealer that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for imparting transverse seals at spaced intervals upon said pair of sheets of film to bond said sheets together along each of said seals without interrupting the movement of film through the apparatus; and

g. a transverse cutting device that reciprocates along the path of said film through said apparatus for cutting across the centers of said transverse seals without interrupting the movement of film through the apparatus.

Interview Summary

On April 14, 2005, a telephonic interview was conducted between Mark D. Miller, attorney for applicant (hereafter "applicant"), and the examiner, John Sipos. All claims were discussed.

5 The applicant pointed out that the inventions of both of the primary references relied on by the examiner (Massey and Soleri) are not continuous action machines, since the reciprocating assemblies in each of these machines require the film to stop during each cycle. By contrast, in the present invention, the film does not stop.

10 The examiner indicated that amending the claims to include language to the effect that the film does not stop would raise a new issue requiring further consideration.